



The Infinite-Z makes 3D printing possible almost anywhere | Photo source Naomi Wu & Creality3D

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DIGITALLY CONTROLLED 3D PRINTER IMPROVES AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

 COMPUTING & TECH

The printer provides unattended, continuous printing of pieces of almost any length

Spotted: Created by hardware engineer Naomi Wu and produced by 3D print experts Creality3D, the Infinite-Z 3DPrintMill (Creality CR-30) makes small scale three-dimensional printing affordable and provides new capability for large-scale print runs. Whether a single long piece or thousands of the same part, the Infinite-Z makes 3D printing possible almost anywhere.

The printer is all metal, and the motion system is tipped 45 degrees, which is what allows for continuous, unattended printing. Ideal for printing many of the same object, the tilted bed moves each part along until it detaches, eliminating the need for manual removal. Teachers can set the machine for remote use, improving both safety of students and accessibility for users with limited mobility. Cosplayers requiring long swords and other accessories can print a single piece rather than a multitude of small parts. Set designers can print architectural features with a significant reduction in the number of pieces required.

Currently crowdfunding on Kickstarter, the Infinite-Z printer is open source and comes with contributions and endorsements from industry founders. The Creality team plans to begin shipping of the first production run in March 2021 and continues to develop the machine, for special needs and for inclusion of more niche components.

From 3D scans of peoples' faces for customised face masks to plant-based materials, Springwise is spotting a range of innovations that are helping bring 3D printing into the mainstream.

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Takeaway:

The agility of 3D printing proved crucial to many countries' production of PPE early in 2020. As the pandemic grinds on, many other industries have taken note and are finding additional uses for the technology, whether that be in education or fashion. Further expanding many brands' consideration of the benefits of such innovation is the ability to collaborate across areas of business and consumer demands for less waste and more on-demand production. The breadth of applications will continue to grow, ideally producing surprising, useful developments and solutions.